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Galina Diachkova

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Ethnocultural processes among the Chukchi in the 20th century

Galina Diachkova*

Résumé: Processus ethnoculturels chez les Tchouktches au 20e siècle

Cette note décrit brièvement la composante tchouktche d'un projet de recherche intitulé «Le rôle des organisations communautaires du Nord, de la Sibérie et de l'Extrême-Orient dans les politiques sociales de la Fédération russe». Cette étude, commencée en 2001, est consacrée aux processus ethnoculturels qui influencent le développement de la communauté tchouktche contemporaine.

Abstract: Ethnocultural processes among the Chukchi in the 20th century

This paper briefly describes the Chukchi component of a research project entitled "The role of the community-based organisations of the North, Siberia and the Far-East in the Russian Federation's social policies." This study, initiated in 2001, focuses on the ethnocultural processes that impact on the development of the contemporaneous Chukchi community.

Introduction

In 2001, the Ford Foundation sponsored the project "The role of the community-based organisations of the North, Siberia and the Far-East in the Russian Federation's social policies." The objectives of the project were to define: 1) the role of the community-based Indigenous organisations in designing social policies in the Russian Federation; 2) the nature and level of cooperation with the Association of the Less-Numerous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation (AKMNSSDV); and 3) the knowledge of Indigenous peoples regarding their legal rights.

*

Department of History and Ethnography, Museum Center Heritage Chukotka, 23 Lenina St., Anadyr, Chukotka, Russia 689000. galinadiatchkova@hotmail.com

The Chukchi part of the project aimed at defining the principal ethnocultural processes that impact, through resistance and destabilization, the development of Chukchi community growth. This note reports on the work, presentations and publications in relation to this study.

Methodology

Due to my field of research (Diachkova 1999, 2000, 2001a-c, 2002), I was responsible for the Chukchi part of the project, and conducted research in Anadyr, as well as in the Chukchi, Iultin (Uelkal) and Provideniya Districts. I used an approach based on the concepts of ethnos and culture as mechanisms of adaptation to the natural and social environments.

In cooperation with the University of Alaska Anchorage, I also took part in the organisation of the 2003 project "Community self-management" in Lorino (Chukchi District) and Novoe Chaplino (Provideniya District). The project was directed towards the development of the villagers' self-management potential when it comes to take decisions on various social problems. The project leader was Vic Fisher (University of Alaska Anchorage).

Dissemination of results

I presented papers at conferences and wrote a few publications in relation to the above mentioned studies (Diachkova 2004, 2005, 2006a,b). A roundtable based on the research results took place in August 2005 in Anadyr under the theme "Issues in Indigenous activism in Chukotka." One of the roundtable recommendations was to involve young people into the discussions. I thus participated in the preparation of the next roundtable held in 2006 under the theme "Youth, Indigenous heritage and the present." I was also involved in the information package on "Indigenous Rights of the Less-Numerous Peoples of the Russian Federation" that was broadcasted by the regional radio program "Purga."

In 2005-2006, I conducted a content analysis of the Indigenous media in the Russian Federation in preparation for an article to be published by Duke University Press. Based on that article, some materials on the cooperation experience between the Indigenous organisations, government structures and the mining industry were produced in 2006 for the Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North of Chukotka. During the meetings of RAIPON (Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, formerly called AKMNSSDV) in Anadyr, members of the Indigenous peoples' organisation of Kamchatka presented their experience in resolving social problems. As a result, the organisation took the decision to start publishing a new journal entitled *V'en* and I was the editor of the first issue that was published in February 2007.

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